



# DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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## Children's Liturgy of the Word

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# Twenty-Ninth Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year A

## Theme: God works through people

### Summary

All power and glory belong to God. Even the laws of nature and time are subject to God, who allows people to organize so that individuals exercise power over communities and countries. We respect leaders who help others to fulfill God's will. God includes them in the divine plan for history, even if they do not know it is happening.

### Objectives

- † Consider together levels of authority and their relationship to God, who has ultimate authority.
- † To evaluate how we cooperate (or not) with God's will.

### Leader's Preparation:

- † Pray the Lectionary readings.
- † Sin is part of our lives and affects our relationship with God.
- † Throughout history, God calls us to continually grow closer by overcoming sin.
- † Jesus made it possible to overcome sin.
- † People are oriented to goodness.
- † God desires us to direct our decisions toward good and just decisions.

### Environment and Materials

- † Two screened adult leaders.
- † Liturgical space for Children's Liturgy of the Word.
- † Candle, table, liturgical colours, and any other visual aids.
- † Read the lectionary readings and backgrounds.
- † Bookmark the readings in the Bible. Place the Bible in a prominent location for the children to see when they enter the space for the Children's Liturgy of the Word.
- † Prepare any hymns that the children will sing as they gather in the space for the Children's Liturgy of the Word.
- † Select volunteers (older children or adults) to proclaim the readings.
- † Display the responsorial psalm refrain lyrics, if possible and desired.
- † Display the Creed, if possible and desired.

### Background

#### **Isaiah 45:1, 4-6**

- † The passage explains that God will use King Cyrus to bring the people who were exiled to Babylon home to Jerusalem.
- † Even though Cyrus, a Persian king, had faith practices different from Israel, God chose him for a special mission.
- † Cyrus released the Jewish people from Babylonian captivity so they could return to Jerusalem.
- † For the Jews, this was a sign that Cyrus was anointed by the one true God who calls every person by name, even those without religious knowledge.

## Matthew 22:1-14

- † The leaders were attempting to trick Jesus to get rid of him.
- † If he objected to the exploitive taxes, the Roman authorities would arrest him for treason.
- † Jesus would have been discredited as a Jewish rabbi if he favoured the Romans.
- † Jesus turned the trap against the Pharisees by answering a question with a question.
- † He showed that God, the authority, demands something more important than money.
- † While his opponents were questioning legalities, Jesus brought them back to a question of image.
- † Jesus' response about the coin implied it belonged to the one whose image it bore.
- † When he spoke of God, the obvious question would be, "Where is God's image?"
- † Jesus trapped his adversaries far more than their question might have trapped him.
- † In response to their supposedly scrupulous question about paying taxes, Jesus cleverly reminded them that as creatures, they owed everything to the God in whose image they were created.

### Prayer Leader Reflection Questions

- † Whose power and authority have an impact on your life?
- † What do you owe to earthly leaders?
- † What do you owe to God?

## The Liturgy

### Procession from the main Church

After the opening prayer, when all are seated, the leaders come forward and stand facing the altar.

**Priest: Dear children, as you have your time now with God's Word, know that you are very precious in his sight. Go now in his love and hear what Jesus says to you today.**

One of the leaders carries the Book of God's Word, held high for all to see. The second leader assists by directing the children. When most of the children have formed a procession, the leader with the book proceeds to the place of the celebration. The second leader usually walks behind the children. Upon arrival at the place of the celebration, the leader places the book on the prepared table.

Welcome.

The leaders assist the children to sit, welcome them and participate in the prayer.

The leader may say the prayer.

**O God, allow our hearts to be open to your Word so we may serve you completely. We ask this through Christ our Lord.**

Invite the children to sit and listen to the readings.

## Lectionary Readings

One of the leaders (or an older child who has prepared the text) stands, takes the book from the table, stands behind the table, and proclaims the first reading. The reading is concluded with: The Word of the Lord. All respond: Thanks be to God.

**FIRST READING Isaiah 45:1, 4-6**

**A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah.**

**This is what God says to Cyrus, King of Persia,**

**"Because I love my chosen people of Israel,  
I have called you by your name.  
I give you a title of honour,  
even though you do not know me.  
I am God, and there is no other God besides me.  
I am the only God.  
Even though you do not know me,  
I give you strength.  
I do this so that people everywhere will know  
that there is no other God but me."**

**The Word of the Lord.**

The leader may teach the children to respond: Thanks be to God.

A period of silence is observed. Inviting the children to think about some particular aspect of the reading during this time may be helpful. Perhaps the gesture of bowing heads and closing eyes will foster the effective use of this silent period.

## **GOSPEL Matthew 22:1-14**

The children stand for the Gospel. The leader proclaims the Gospel.

### **✠A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.**

All respond: Glory to you, Lord. All sign themselves on the forehead, lips and breast.

#### **Jesus used this story to teach the people:**

**Some Jewish leaders, called Pharisees,  
wanted to trick Jesus into saying something wrong.  
So they went to him and said,**

**"Teacher, we know that you are honest  
and that you always teach the truth about God.  
We know that you are not afraid  
of what other people will say about you.  
You treat everyone the same.  
So tell us what you think about this—  
should we pay taxes to Caesar or not?"**

**Jesus knew they were trying to trick him, so he said,**

**"You phonies! Why are you trying to trick me?  
Show me the money you use to pay your taxes."**

**Jesus looked at it and said,**

**"Whose picture is on this money, and whose name?"**

**They answered,**

**"Caesar's."**

**So Jesus said,**

**"Well then, give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar,  
and give to God what belongs to God."**

#### **The Gospel of the Lord.**

The leader concludes the Gospel with The Gospel of the Lord. All respond: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The children sit to listen to the reflection.

## Reflection

The leader may offer this reflection in these or similar words. Please consider the amount of time available to return to the main assembly. The leader may wish to reduce the number of questions.

Other people make many decisions that affect you.

### **What are some decisions that other people make for you?**

Your parents make rules for your house about when to wake up and what to eat. If you are old enough to go to school, your teacher decides about homework and your assignments.

One of the most important people in charge of you is you! It might not always feel like it, but you can make many decisions. You decide what to say or perhaps to say nothing at all. You choose whether to be kind or mean. You decide how you are going to cooperate with others who are in charge of you.

God is the most important one in charge of you. God made you. God gave you life. God keeps you alive. If God forgot about you for even one second, you wouldn't exist anymore, but God doesn't forget about you. Because we are so loved and so special to God, we can choose to follow God's commands.

### **How can you choose to follow God?**

King Cyrus was someone who cooperated with the plan of God. In the time before Cyrus, the Jewish people had suffered a great tragedy. The Babylonians had defeated the people of Israel and taken them from the holy city home. When Cyrus defeated the Babylonians, he told the Jewish people they could have back what had been lost: they could return home and worship God. Cyrus allowed the people of Israel to live out the plan of God. In that way, Cyrus himself cooperated with the plan of God. Even without knowing or worshiping the God of Israel, Cyrus was anointed, specially sent by God to fulfill his plan.

People who are in charge of others have an important responsibility to pay attention to God's plan and make decisions so that others can cooperate with it.

Following the reflection, the prayer leader invites everyone to stand to profess our faith.

Together, recite the Creed.

## The Creed

Depending on the time, a simple profession of faith may be made (see below).

Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

All: We do believe.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, who became our brother and gave his life for us?

All: We do believe.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts and gives us everlasting life?

All: We do believe.

Leader: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it.

## Prayer of the Faithful

Invite the children to think of the needs of others and to announce their petitions. The leaders may begin the intercessions by announcing the needs they know. It may be necessary for the leader to repeat and/or paraphrase the petition and conclude it with the cue for the response: For this, we pray. All respond to each petition by saying: Lord, hear our prayer. Sample intercessions are below.

Leader: Grateful for our faith, we now pray to God.

Please respond, "Lord, hear our prayer." R.

For Pope Francis and Douglas, our bishop, we pray to the Lord. R.

For government leaders, we pray to the Lord. R.

For an end to hunger, we pray to the Lord. R.

For our families, we pray to the Lord. R.

For the sick, we pray to the Lord. R.

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children or add intercessions based on the Church's current needs, the world, or the local community.

For all who have died, we pray to the Lord. R.

Merciful God, you are compassion and love. Grant that we, your children, may always seek your forgiveness and forgive our brothers and sisters. Through Christ our Lord.

Children: Amen.

Ask the children to return to the main assembly. Ask them to return quietly and perhaps think about what they have heard and are now doing.

Be mindful of children having difficulty finding their families.

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